(No. XVII.)

THE PASTIME.

Schenectady, Saturday, July 25, 1807.

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For the Pastime.

Loose thoughts, suggested by the bold declaration, "ALL ACTIONS ARE SELFISH."

Are the actions to which pity prompts us, selfish or social? Setting instinctive actions aside, it is easy to make all others directly, or indirectly selfish; but who can argue thus without indulging unjust apprehensions of the benevolent Creator? In the common course of nature nothing takes place without ends and means. Pity is raised by pain. It is manifest that the original intention of pity was social; but different persons bestow charity from different motives, according to their disposition and character. A tender hearted man does it from pure benevolence; to consider benevolence as the natural tendency of the constitution of nature. But this constitution may be violated. Its tendency may be perverted. A man who has never cherished the social feelings, experiences no pain at the sight of an object demanding his charity and pity. Such an one is charitable from ostentation, habit, or example. But he who has not repressed the natural inclination of his social nature, will contribute to the relief of an object of misery without reflection: and thus far charity appears to be instinctive, and thus far it is social. Lord Kaimes' charity "to relieve a person from want" is cold and artificial: not flowing spontaneously from the heart. That true benevolence which shines thro' the ruins of the fall, is an illustrious symbol of the Divinity, who delights in doing good to his creatures, though it cannot promote his happiness or glory.

ON TRUE SYMPATHY.

[A letter from Mr. SARGENT, to the Editor, covers the following essay from his pen, originally published in the Boston Repertory.]

Ut enim crudum adhuc vulnus medentium manus reformidat, deiude patitur, ac ultro requirit; sic recens animi dolor consolationes rejicit ac refugit, mox desiderat, et clementer admotis acquiescit.—*Plin. Ep.*

There are few errours, into which mankind are so frequently deluded, and which, upon reflection, appear so palpably absurd, as premature visits of condolence.

When the decease of any person of distinction becomes known, his house instantly resounds with the lamentations of officious friends, and the foolish inquiries of neighbouring gossips. The unfortunate individual, who is supposed to feel, more accutely

than others, the pangs of a recent and afflicting separation, is overwhelmed with frivolous consolations, extravagant encomiums on the departed friend, impertinent interrogatories, and repeated proffers of unnecessary service.

Visits of consolation proceed from the wish to be partners in our misfortune, or from the inclination to appear so; from the simplicity of our weaker friends, or from the vanity of our more impertinent neighbours. The former have a claim to our forbearance, and as for the latter, however painful in the estimation of the world, we must receive their visits, or incur their reproaches.

The nostrums of condolence are recommended as lenitives of grief; but, it is certain, that when administered, as they almost invariably are, by the rash hand of an empirick, the remedy is more fatal than the unrestrained effects of the disease itself. They are, doubtless, salutary for those, the excess of whose mourning is the mercer's joy, and who consider form and ceremony the essential constituents of sorrow.

Expressions of grief, which are the effects of real sensibility, can neither easily nor immediately be modified; for that ecstacy of feeling, from which they arise, is impatient of restriction, and, if subdued in one form, will, like Proteus, confound us in another.

Congeniality of feeling in an equal degree is the only relief of which I conceive sudden and extreme sorrow susceptible; and this is not to be procured from the dealers in early consolation, for it is impossible for others to feel on such occasions like ourselves, and however perfect they may be in the use of their imitative powers, their actions can never fail of displeasing us, and often fall so far below the dignity of nature as to excite our contempt. To a mind therefore, whose faculties are weakened by some late and afflicting event, the studied remarks of languid sympathy are like the lancet to the empty vein. Far from alleviating, they often convert our sorrow into melancholy, and, though they sometimes remove it, yet it is not without the loss of our understanding. Altogether unsuspecting they have been the cause of our distraction, our friends depart, in amazement at the failure of their endeavours, which they attribute to their own want of energy, and the infrequency of their visits.

As a turbulent and daring multitude collect their strength to subdue the opposers of their inclinations, and, after victory, aspire to the higher outrage, elated by conquest, and enriched with spoil; extreme sorrow, which is invincible by consolatory precept, increased by opposition, arising more powerful from restraints, proceeds with redoubled vehemence, and throws down every barrier, which reason had erected to counteract the fury of its course.

With retirement and sufficient firmness to decline those early

attentions, which customary form prescribes, our grief will at length so far subside, as to render consolation pleasing; and fascinated by its charms, we shall finally pursue the same object with avidity, from which we have fled with disgust It is like food we have nauseated, which our organs have acquired strength to digest, and which repairs our debilitated frame.

It is not however known by its early approach nor the clamour of its conversation; not by the variety of its proffers, but the service it performs; moderation is its constant associate, and silence is sometimes its interpreter.

Few can dispense their consolation with beneficial effect; either too precipitate on the one hand, or injudicious on the other, they do not see the agreement between opportunity and application, or disproportion the relief they offer to the malady they propose to cure. No rules of conduct can be given, from which we shall not be obliged to make frequent and important deviation; since these rules must change with every degree of sorrow, and be adapted to every variation of the mind.

We cannot reach the object in our pursuit, without the assitance of nature, and she will frequently displease us, by the simplicity of her manners, and her contempt for the votaries of form. Yet as it is expedient to present the potion in some alluring disguise, we should endeavour, when we instill the balm of consolation, to conceal the physician's hand, nor seem to aim at what we are striving to effect.

Since these abortive efforts of confidence belong to the sphere of human action, they can never more correctly be displayed than by a representation of the actors themselves; I therefore conclude this essay with the following narration.

Florio was the husband of *Anna*, and their affection, which was formed on a firmer basis than momentary love, suffered not the smallest diminution by the lapse of time; for *Anna* possessed, in no inconsiderable degree, those personal endowments and charms of mind, that chain the eye, and captivate the understanding.

Caius and *Amintor* were the companions of *Florio*, and to each of them he had shewn equal marks of his friendship and esteem.

After three years enjoyment of all the bliss that mutual passion can afford, *Anna* was torn by death from the arms of *Florio*. His grief was sincere though silent: he retired to an apartment, to enjoy the luxury of those feelings, which do not admit participation.

Not long however had he remained in this situation, when the door flew open, and *Caius*, in all the ecstacy of grief, rushed in to embrace him; and seizing him in his arms, pronounced an elogium on the virtues of the deceased. After some moral remarks on the certainty of death, he begged his friend, who had hitherto remained perfectly composed, but was now faintly at-

tempting to disengage himself, which *Caius* mistook for a proof of his excessive sorrow, that he would calm his agitated mind, and not suffer his grief to betray him into any extravagance of action ; and in a few hours he departed, promising to repeat his visit.

Shortly after, he dispatched a messenger with Sherlock's meditations on death ; and came the succeeding day, with four epitaphs and as many monodies, from which he pressed *Florio* to make a selection.

But the conduct of *Caius* even exceeded the limits of the sorrow he professed ; and when he followed in the melancholy train, his grief discovered itself in that neglect of person and wildness of despair, that is characteristick of eastern obsequies.

Amintor was absent at the funeral of *Anna*. Many days had already elapsed, and he had not yet visited the mournful *Florio*.

At length he came, one evening, when his friend was alone. He entered the dwelling, where joy had recently resided, but which now was the habitation of sorrow. *Florio*, at that moment, was holding in his arms his infant child, on whose features he gazed with attention ; for nature had already sketched, in its countenance, the outlines of an original, which was now no more. The infant raised its little arm, and, with a smile, pointed to a tear, that had fallen on it ; altogether unconscious of the cause from which it proceeded.

Amintor at length advanced, and taking the hand of *Florio*, would have inquired after his health ; but the tear, that started in his eye, checked his utterance, and discovered the emotion of his soul—he turned away to conceal it—he would have attempted once more, but his feelings urged him to be gone—he departed ; and left *Florio* in admiration at the eloquence of silent sympathy.

He came often after, when his feelings were more at his command ; but his visits were always unwitnessed by the world ; it was long before he struck the chord of *Florio's* grief, and then, with the gentlest hand.

The world viewed *Amintor* as a time serving friend ; and considered the actions of *Caius* as proofs of unlimited affection ; but *Florio* had not this opinion ; nor have I.

From the Troy Gazette.

[It seems to be either not generally known, or not recollected, that Gen. Burgoyne (who will long be remembered in, and will certainly *always* remember, this vicinity) is one among the best of writers. This remark is not intended for the theatrical part of the world. But those, who have known him only in a situation odious to freemen, may, when justice has triumphed and indignation subsided, be pleased to view him as the gentleman and elegant scholar. The following from his pen, has that perspicuity and conciseness in narration, that strength of description, and that modest dignity and affectionate warmth of sentiment, which never fail to extort the praise & excite the esteem of noble & polished minds.—*Troy Gaz.*]

FUNERAL OF GENERAL FRASER NEAR SARATOGA.

About sunset the corpse of General Fraser was brought up the hill, attended, only by the officers who had lived in his family. To arrive at the redoubt, it passed within view of the greatest part of both armies. Gen. Phillips, Gen. Reidesel, and myself, who were standing together, were struck with the humility of the procession: they, who were ignorant that privacy had been requested by Gen. Fraser, might ascribe it to neglect. We could neither endure that reflection, nor indeed restrain our natural propensity to pay our last attendance to his remains. We joined the procession, and were witnesses of the affecting scene that ensued.

The incessant cannonade during the solemnity; the steady attitude and unalterable voice of the chaplain who officiated, though frequently covered with dust, from the shot which the American artillery threw around us; the mute but expressive mixture of sensibility and indignation upon every countenance; these objects will remain to the last of life on the mind of every man who was present. The growing duskiness of the evening added to the scenery, and the whole marked a character of that juncture, which would make one of the finest subjects for the pencil of a master that the field ever exhibited.

To the canvass, and to the faithful page of a more important historian, gallant friend, I consign thy memory.

POETRY.

[The following pathetick poem has been communicated to us, as unpublished. Whether it has or has not been previously given to the world, it is new in this country, and to our readers in particular, excepting, perhaps, a few, who may recollect to have heard it read with exquisite taste and melting pathos, by Mr. Cooper. The piece is said to have been found in the streets of London, and communicated in an unfinished state to the manager of the Drury-lane Theatre. By him it was compleated and brought on the stage. From the M. S. S. in the hands of Mr. Cooper, the copy now in our possession was taken. We trust no apology will be required for trespassing so much on the bounds assigned to our Poetical Department, when we have it in our power to expiate the offence by an offering like this.]

THE SNOW STORM.

The day had been dreary, the wind from the east,
The cold it was pinching to man and to beast,
And the clouds seem'd to labour with snow;
When William had driven his flock to the farm,
To shelter them well, and to keep them from harm,
For the sky, dark and low'ring, threaten'd a storm,
And he thought it would bluster and blow.

"And now," said the shepherd, "my flock is all sure,
"My stock is well hous'd and my bleaters secure,
"Besides, 'tis the last of the week;
"And, if in my cot I should loiter and stay,
"And not see my Mary, ah! what would she say?

The Snow Storm.

"For the fear of a storm never kept me away;
"She would think I was chang'd or was sick."

Right true was his love, and his Mary was so,
And she promis'd to marry him not long ago,
As soon as the winter was gone;
For her father was dead, and her mother was ill,
She knew not herself how to manage the mill;
Her flock bleated round, and she could not but feel
'Twas comfortless living alone.

He whistled on Tinker, and threw round his plaid,
Nor fear'd the dark night while he sought the dear maid,
For oft had he trod the same road;
The snow how it drifted, and bleak blew the wind,
But what was the snow to a lover so kind!
Or the fear of a storm, were he able to find,
Dear Mary thy charming abode.

Away as he hied, thought no ill could betide,
And his poor faithful dog trudging close by his side,
For they had no great distance to roam;
"O'er the hill, thro' the woodland, and turning the stile,
"Why the whole of the journey is scarcely a mile;
"Let me see, but my Mary, one kiss and a smile,
"And then I'll return to my home.

"Come, Tinker, come near me, for fear you should stray,
"The snow it grows deeper, more trackless the way,
"And I wish not to leave you behind;
"If you, Tinker, should tarry, my Mary would sigh,
"She pats on your head, when she bids me good bye,
"And calls you "Dear fellow," and wipes her bright eye,
"Her heart is so tender and kind."

More fierce grew the storm, and more high the wind blew,
The church on the hill was obscur'd from his view,
And darker than pitch grew the night;
Benumb'd with the cold, he was thinking he'd stay
And chat with his true love until it were day,
When the veering wind led him a little astray,
And he slipt, and then sunk out of sight.

He fell down the cliff, that hung over the wood,
Near the half frozen pool of the wanderer's grave,
Quite breathless and pale with the cold:
"Thou father Almighty, thou ruler on high!
"Whose storms shake the ocean, the earth and the sky,
"Protect but my love, and contented I die."
Thus he pray'd, and these words were his last.

Poor Mary, who watch'd the approach of the storm,
And fear'd, lest her lover should come to some harm,
Sat list'ning to every noise:
The wind and snow driving were all that she heard;
She wish'd he would come, but his coming she fear'd;
But Tinker, poor Tinker, her fond bosom cheer'd
With the sound of his welcome known voice.

Ere she open'd the door, she expected his knock,
She expected his kiss; but how great was her shock,
To find that no William was there!
With dread apprehensions, poor Mary turn'd pale;
But, when faithful Tinker had howl'd out his tale,

He pull'd by her gown, and in spite of the gale
She follow'd in woe and despair.

"This mantle, his present, shall shroud my cold form,
"And I'll search for my love in the depth of the storm;
"Come, Tinker, come shew where he lies:
"Last night how I dream'd that my William was here,
"All blithe, and so gay like the spring of the year;
"Ah me! how his voice seems to thrill thro' my ear!
"How I feast on the glance of his eyes!"

Not very far off, at the foot of the hill,
And down a steep rock at the race of the mill,
The corpse of her lover now lay:
The hollow wind howl'd thro' the trees on the brow,
Her limbs were encumber'd with volumes of snow,
And keen was the cold; but she felt it not now,
And Tinker, he led her the way.

She paus'd as she pass'd where the Hawthorn tree grew,
For first in its shade had he vow'd to be true;
And she sigh'd as she bade it adieu.
She stalk'd to the cliff, that hung over the wave,
And the half frozen pool, now the wanderer's grave!
The snow drifted round her—what sighs now she gave!
"My William, I'll soon be with you."

When breathless with fear, she arriv'd at the place,
She darted one look at her lover's pale face,
Forever, alas! he was gone.
With a piteous shriek she sunk down and died:
Their bodies next morning a neighbour espied;
And poor faithful Tinker lay close by their side,
As dead and as cold as a stone.

In sorrowful dirge they were borne to their house;
And many a villager mourn'd at their tomb,
And wept as they bade it adieu:
And you, who may read the sad tale I relate,
Should you e'er love like them, may you ne'er meet their fate;
But know from their virtues their bliss is complete,
And learn from a dog to be true.

SONNETS ON THE DEATH OF A MOTHER.

BY CHARLES LLOYD.

[Continued.]

SONNET III.

Meek friend! I have been traversing the steep
Where, when a frolic boy, with patient eye
Thou heedest all my wandering, (I could weep
To think per chance thy shade might hover nigh,
Marking thy alter'd child;) how little then
Dream'd I, that thou, a tenant of the grave,
No more should'st smile on me, when I might crave
Some little solace mid the hum of men!
Those times had joys which I no more shall know,
And e'en their saddest moments now seem sweet:
Such comforts mingle with remember'd woe!
Now with this hope I prompt my onward feet,
That He who took thee, pitying my lone heart,
Will re-unite us where friends never part!

Sonnets.

SONNET IV.

Erst when I wander'd far from those I lov'd,
If weariness o'ertook me, if my heart
Heav'd big with sympathy, and ach'd t' impart
Its secret treasures, much have I been mov'd,
Thinking of those most dear; and I have known
It very sweet all feelingly to pour
Of youthful phantasies th' excentive store
Through the warm line: nor didst thou seldom own
The tender gratulation, earliest friend!
And now when heavily the lone hour's roll
Stealeth an image on my cheated soul
No other than thyself! and I would send
Tidings of love—till the mind starts from sleep
As it had heard thy knell!—I pause and weep!

SONNET V.

Oft when I brood on what my heart has felt,
And think on former friends, of whom, alas!
She, the most dear, sleeps where th' autumnal grass
To the wet night-wind flags, I inly melt;
And oft I seem (my spring tide fled away
While the heart's anguish darkens on my brow)
Like the lone leaf upon the wintry bough
That pines for the glad season's parting ray!
Such thoughts as these, when the dull hours pass by
Shroud them in hues of saddest sickliness!
Yet oft I wiselier muse, yea almost bless
The shiverings of departed exstacy;
Thinking that He who thus my spirit tries,
Draws it to heaven a cleansed sacrifice!

SONNET VI.

My bible! scarcely dare I open thee!
Rememb'ring how each morn I wont to give
Thy due texts holily, while she did live,
The pious woman! What though for the meek
Thou treasurests glad tidings, still to me
Of her I love dost thou so plainly speak,
And kindling virtue dost so amply tell
Of her, most virtuous! that 'twere hard to quell
The pang which thou wilt wake! yet hallow'd look,
Tho' for a time my bosom thou wilt wring
Thy great and precious promises will bring
Best consolation! come then, I will look,
In thy long clasped volume, there to find
Happy, tho' lost her form, my blest friend's mind!

☞ To close the Session, a Supplementary Number will be published on Thursday, with a full account of the celebration of Commencement, and of the Adelphic Society's anniversary.

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